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773.5-MSP/3-2558

FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, TRIPOLI

DESP. NO. 341

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

DATE March 25, 1958

REF : Dept. of State Telegram 693, March 13; Embassy Telegram 691, March 18.

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION AF-5	DEPT. IN FO RM/R-2 IRC-8 EUR-5 VW/MSC-1 ICA-10 IO
	REC'D 3/7	OTHER C/A-12 OSD-4 ARMY-4 NAVY-3 AIR-3

SUBJECT: Status Report on Libyan Army's American Equipment

It will be recalled that the Report of the Joint Military Survey Team for Libya (Hunter Report) recommended that the United States provide clothing and equipment for 1035 men of the Libya Army broken down into the following units:

1 Headquarters, Infantry Brigade	35	men
1 Headquarters and Headquarters Company	143	men
Infantry Battalion		
1 Support Company	131	men
3 Infantry Rifle Companies	378	men
1 Headquarters and Headquarters Battery	60	men
Field Artillery Regiment		
2 Field Artillery Batteries	288	men

(The Headquarters and Headquarters Company, the Support Company and the three rifle companies would make up one infantry battalion of 652 men).

So far, with the possible exception of the 70 recruits assigned to the existing artillery battery mentioned below, it is proper to consider only the 3rd Battalion (641 men) as a part of the 1035 man "package". This Battalion was formed in August 1957 and has had at least two major personnel increments since that time. The 3rd Battalion is currently stationed at Barce and has received what U.S. equipment from the late 1957 shipments has so far been distributed. This consists primarily of motor transport.

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The Chief of Staff, Iraqi Major General Abdul Ragheb, has informed the MAAG that he intends to activate two additional field artillery batteries within the next year and two more sometime thereafter. He originally wished to activate one before the end of this Libyan fiscal year, ending March 31, but this has not been done. The first two batteries would be equipped with six U.S. 105 mm howitzers each (the 13th to be held in depot reserve), the last two with 25-pounders, gifts of the Turkish Government.

He has presently added 70 recruits (Embassy despatch 319, March 5, 1958) into the existing field artillery battery, bringing it considerably over strength. It is anticipated that following their training with this battery and the recruitment of additional personnel, the 1st 105 mm howitzer battery would be formed. This, plus the 2nd 105 mm howitzer battery and the 3rd Battalion, would form the bulk of the 1035-man "package" (approximately 950 men).

General Ragheb, however, has also informed the MAAG that he will not recruit additional personnel until he knows the Libyan FY 1959 figure for his Army. Although the LFY 1958 ends on March 31, the LFY 1959 budget will not receive more legislative attention until Parliament reconvenes after Ramadan, which ends about April 19. It seems doubtful, furthermore, that the General will know much about the size of the Army's next year's budget until after agreement is reached between the Libyan and British Governments, and the Libyan and U.S. Governments on the levels of U.S. and U.K. financial/economic aid. There is at the moment no indication of when these problems will be resolved. (The MAAG, however, is requesting the Chief of Staff to furnish firm activation dates for the units scheduled to receive American equipment now in Libya, except for the 3rd Battalion.)

On the question of the disposition of the American equipment remaining until after the activation of the two 105 mm howitzer batteries, the howitzers, most of the communications equipment, uniforms, machine guns and some of the small arms will probably remain in storage in the Tripoli area. This is, of course, less the equipment issued to the 3rd Battalion.

Concerning training, the Libyan Government has yet to accept the U.S. offer to train the whole Libyan Army or the 1035-man increment. This is posing a problem as far as the care and maintenance of the delivered American equipment is concerned. The Chief of the MAAG, however, intends shortly to remedy this situation by assigning certain of his personnel to instruct the Libyans so as to prevent deterioration.

For the Ambassador:

Rodger P. Davies

Rodger P. Davies
Counselor of Embassy